

High Wycombe C of E Combined School

Loakes Road, High Wycombe, HP11 2JU

Inspection dates 4–5 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides strong leadership, including of teaching. She is ably supported by other members of the senior leadership team and an effective governing body.
- Teaching is good over time. Standards reached in reading, writing and mathematics show a consistent pattern of above average attainment by the end of Year 6; pupils make consistently good progress during their time in the school.
- Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school and justifiably feel that their children do well.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well and feel very safe. They benefit from the broad curriculum and wide range of extra-curricular experiences which contribute most effectively to their personal development.
- Pupils have good opportunities to be creative and music is a particular strength. The good provision for those who have special educational needs results in their good progress.
- The staff take good care of the pupils and safeguarding arrangements are secure.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is unevenness in the level of challenge in some year groups for more-able pupils.
- Marking does not always indicate clearly to pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 1 compared to national averages is not as good as in reading and writing.
- There is an over reliance on worksheets to record work in Key Stage 1 which restricts pupils' own thinking and also their writing development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons, of which two were joint observations.
- They observed reading sessions and pupils reading.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined.
- The school's own parent survey was looked at together with the 26 responses on Parent View.
- A telephone discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, selected staff and a group of pupils.
- Progress data and other documentation were reviewed.
- A discussion was held with the Chair of the Governing Body.

Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Lynne Bradbury

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized one-form entry primary school with seven classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The school does not have any disabled pupils.
- Children begin the Reception class in the September before their fifth birthday.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is above average. Almost all of these pupils speak English fluently.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is a local leader in education and in this role supports other schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to the pupil premium is below average.
- On the first afternoon of the inspection, pupils walked to church, some distance away, to attend their harvest festival.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 in mathematics and writing by:
 - giving pupils a greater opportunity to work practically in mathematics to develop their understanding
 - reducing the reliance on worksheets and giving pupils scope to arrange their own work and think for themselves
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write independently across different subjects using their knowledge of letter sounds and letter blends.
- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - ensuring that there is consistency across the school in the use of assessment to ensure that more-able pupils are challenged sufficiently in their work
 - making sure that staff are more consistent in providing development points for learning when they mark pupils' work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's attainment on entry is in line with that expected for the children's ages. In the main, the children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, reaching average standards by the end of Reception. A recent review of the curriculum organisation and learning environment following advisory support is resulting in improvements to both the quality of teaching and learning. There are already signs of hastening progress. Results in the national phonic test for Year 1 pupils held recently were good.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and reach broadly average standards, although their attainment in mathematics compared to national figures is not as strong as it is in reading and writing. Even in writing not enough demands are always made of the pupils because an over use of worksheets restricts pupils' own efforts to write creatively. Worksheets do not encourage the pupils to organise their work in mathematics sufficiently well either.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress as they are identified early and intervention programmes are carefully matched to their specific needs. Small-group work and one-to-one tuition support their good progress, which is carefully tracked. The school has several pupils with statements of special educational needs and these pupils are well supported.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress by the end of Year 6 and often do better than their respective ethnic groups nationally. The occasional pupils who are less familiar with English are immersed in language in the Reception class through play activities that develop their language well.
- Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 accelerates rapidly in Years 5 and 6. Good quality teaching, including some that is outstanding, combined with the pupils' very mature attitudes to learning, are key factors. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above average over time.

The quality of teaching is good

- Over time, teaching is good. Significant amounts of good teaching were seen during the inspection and some was outstanding. Nevertheless, some is satisfactory. The quality is highest in Years 5 and 6 where classroom environments are stimulating and really helpful to the pupils' learning. In a writing assignment, Year 6 pupils had researched for themselves the 1953 ascent of Everest. They used their notes effectively to write sensitively about their experience as one of the climbers combining this with their study of mountains in geography.
- The teaching of reading is good. Staff teach the sounds that letters make (phonics) well and group pupils well by ability. However, staff rely too heavily on worksheets in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and there is insufficient practical work to cement their understanding.
- Specialist music teaching has produced a good choir and pupils combine theory with practical and creative music playing in lessons. The high quality and range of musical instruments, together with the good quality of teaching, supports pupils' good progress in music.
- Staff have good relationships with the pupils and the atmosphere in lessons is conducive to good learning. Learning intentions are shared well and staff often ensure that the pupils know how to be successful. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good use of self-assessment criteria for different styles of writing provided by the teacher which supports the good quality of their written work.
- Teachers encourage pupils to use terminology appropriate to different subjects so that pupils can speak specifically about aspects of their work. They use sophisticated mathematical language in Key Stage 2.
- Marking is generally good but some teachers are better than others in using it to help pupils to improve. Teachers are consistent in praising pupils in what they have done well.
- Teachers make good use of pairing pupils to share an idea or to discuss an answer. This approach supports the pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively and enhances their confidence and fluency. Year 3 pupils excitedly shared ideas for a recipe using 'magical'

ingredients.

- While the work is matched well for pupils who find learning more difficult, in some lessons more-able pupils are not challenged enough because insufficient account is taken of what they have previously been able to do. Worksheets in Key Stage 1 often demand too little of the pupils.
- Staff manage the pupils well. Relationships between staff and the pupils are naturally harmonious and respectful. They support the good work ethic. Pupils feel able to own up to their difficulties, as well as talk about their understanding. Staff are enthusiastic in their work. They dressed up as book characters for a special day during the inspection and enjoyment was shared all round.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils get along extremely well together showing a high level of respect for one another's different cultures and backgrounds. There have been no racist incidents. All pupils took an active part in the harvest festival service. The lack of incidents in the behaviour logs indicates that standards of behaviour are typically high.
- In lessons, pupils show a high level of interest in their learning and state that they are very happy at school. This is confirmed by parents' and carers' views. They want to do well and work hard in their activities. The children are immersed in their learning.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and also well cared for. One pupil said, 'The school is small and cosy.' They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, such as staying away from expanses of water and being aware of road safety. They have a very good appreciation of different forms of bullying but state that such incidents do not happen in school. They are aware of the risk of cyber-bullying and feel confident to deal with this should it ever arise.
- The pupils' outstanding social, spiritual, cultural and moral development is supported most effectively through philosophy lessons, the wealth of extra-curricular activities and a breadth of studies in religious education.
- Pupils have strong links with the elderly residents of the area and their visits are well received. The residents have recently donated part of a grant that they received to the school in appreciation of these links. Additionally, pupils engage well with pupils from other schools through sporting and other events.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school well and is effectively supported by the senior leadership team. School development priorities are based on a range of opinion and focus on increasing attainment. Staff have identified the need to improve progress in Key Stage 1 and are taking action to do so. For example, training in phonics and the use of new resources are now showing through in pupils' increased progress.
- Pupil premium funding is used well for the targeted pupils. The blend of extra teaching and new resources is having a positive impact on the good progress of those who have special educational needs.
- Performance management and teacher appraisal are undertaken well to improve teaching. Staff are appreciative of the opportunities that they have for training and further professional development which enhance their skills. They feel that they receive good support from one another and from senior staff.
- Subject leaders manage their responsibilities well, keeping a good eye on progress throughout the school. They have clear plans for the year ahead and are made accountable by reporting back to governors.
- The range of monitoring activities which take place help leaders and managers to keep abreast of the quality of work. Tracking of pupils' progress is good. As a result, there is an early identification of any pupil who is not making expected progress and action is taken.
- The curriculum has a good blend of core subjects and creative elements, such as art and

music, and is well balanced. It includes philosophy, which helps pupils appreciate the views of others. The good range of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' interests. Residential visits for outdoor pursuits support the pupils' social skills and sense of adventure.

- Links with other schools are strong and support the opportunities that pupils have. These include occasional visits to secondary schools for specialist teaching, for example in design technology and science. The local authority has provided good advisory support in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Parents and carers have positive views of the school. Good communication through the school website includes many ideas and resources for parents and carers to support their children at home. Parents and carers can express their views through a parent council. One parent wrote in the school's recent parent survey, 'I think that the school succeeds in creating a true partnership between staff, parents and children and has a genuine community feel.'
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is well organised with a good committee structure
 - has links with subject leaders to help the governing body keep abreast of progress and developments
 - ensures that all governors are aware of their individual roles and the focus of specific initiatives during each term through the governors' plan
 - ensures that equality of opportunity is promoted.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110463
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	403120

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Langham
Headteacher	Celine Hawkins
Date of previous school inspection	8-9 November 2007
Telephone number	01494 524220
Fax number	01494 539330
Email address	office@highwycombecombined.bucks.sch.uk

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